

A FACE IN THE NAMES

Urgent rock music under BLACK

FADE IN

LONG SHOTS of Vietnam Veterans Monument in Washington.

INTERCUT CU'S of various hands placing flowers, making rubbings--music gets more strident under these.

DISSOLVE TO
stock shot of WW 2 war bond rally or the like, people together. Linger on the clothes in grainy stills resembling hand-tinted photographs.

CUT TO short sequence of victory parade, vigorous march music under until

CUT TO bw jitterbuggers. They're speeded up--no music.

GO TO BLACK.
Rock returns, distorted and faster; vaguely recognizable individual singing voices from the era as

STRAGGLY PEACE MARCH FADES IN.

CUT TO
luscious red which fills the screen Camera backs away to see red car, man lovingly polishing. Backs further to see rowhouse street in Northeast Philadelphia.

DISSOLVE TO

1 INT large studio apartment, 50s in feeling. Veterans' Day, November 11, 1986. Morning.

FERN and GEORGIA drink coffee. Table contains some notebooks, jar of pencils, pens, markers, a photo album.

They turn to MAC'S voice. MAC holds up ice cream carton at frig.

MAC
Mmmmmm, I thought, Butter Pecan!
He's like a kid. Just like a kid'd
do. Put it back empty. I was dying
for some. [I'm] not fat enough.

(Some inappropriate or exaggerated gesture.)

MAC to table, sits.

FERN

Your father's always alone here.
Why put it back empty for himself?

GEORGIA

(hurried) Anyways, little early for
ice--

MAC

Maybe he had somebody from that
church committee up or something.
(shakes notebooks, etc.) Witness
this committee folderol.

FERN

Parable of the empty ice cream
carton. Seek and ye shall find--
nothing.

GEORGIA

(to MAC)

Your mother? When I knew her? "I
got my mouth set for it!" she'd
always say.

FERN

She set her mouth for about a
million desserts. God rest it.

GEORGIA

They say they're the best, the ones
with nuts. The...uh...room the nuts
take? Better than the crappy sugar
and all.

MAC (aside)

And the greatest of these is
clarity.

FERN

Big fat pecans'll save your life.
Is it worth it?

MAC

Yes and no, like everything else.

GEORGIA

Hey you get sick of hearing about it. You can't turn around. They think they got you up against a wall or something. I got news. I eat what I want.

FERN

Go get 'em Georgia Baby!

MAC

I don't need it anyway. That's for sure. Well where's Dad gone to? Let's get this road on the show. They won't hold up the ceremony for us. And it's not a hop, skip, and jump down to Washington. AND... there just may be a stop, too.

GEORGIA

(to MAC re DAD) You know.

Camera looks with them to bathroom door.

FERN

You're the one who wants to eat and drink coffee anyway. We'd be pretty near Washington right now if--

MAC

And I'm the one who usually wants to get going, hey Georgia?

GEORGIA

It's your brother I knew, Mac, not you.

MAC gets up and wanders, picks things up, discards, restless, jumpy.

MAC

So, anyway, I'm contradiction. Lots of go and sit on my ass. Life abounds in in in contradiction and irony. Abounds!

GEORGIA

Whatever you say, Mac.

FERN

Most of it's predictable. Fashioned by the victim with great neurotic skill.

MAC

At any rate, while the old man
dandies himself up in there we--

GEORGIA

It's nice to see him pay
attention to himself. For anybody.
It's a way to--

MAC

never get anywhere!

FERN (sarcastic)

There's time...a lifetime.

MAC is into some slapdash organizing of articles in a
cabinet.

MAC

Speak for yourself. Better for me
[to] try to hurry up a bit.

GEORGIA

You got older--I mean since I met
you those few times with Jimmy.
Years ago now--no offense.

MAC

To me it's been.

FERN

(who has heard it all before)
Just...have to learn to cool out
when it rages.

MAC

Easy for you to say, Fern m'love,
but I've worn out. Going, going,
gone. One day you're walking around
and...the next...

FERN

You're on your knees.

GEORGIA

You feel that way sometimes.

MAC

That's okay. It's when you don't
feel anything else.

FERN

It's an infection. You catch it from other burnouts. Then you have conferences and workshops when you should've had guts.

GEORGIA

That's the way [to] get around 'em, huh? All these workshops for teachers.

MAC

I'm workshopped out for sure, but I've tried guts too. They can handle anything. Stonewall 'em they go around. Butt against them they slide off like shit.

GEORGIA

You could retire, turn over a new lease.

FERN

Or something like that. (to MAC, who fumbles around with some bottles) Allow me? (in rising)

FERN exchanges places with MAC--her neatening up routine is calmer and more methodical.

DISCRETIONARY ANGLES FOR REST OF SCENE UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE.

MAC

Less than four years to go out that window! Leap out! Fly out! (He tries an awkward pantomime, rocking the chair.)

GEORGIA

Window? Why not now? Be my guest.

MAC

Retirement window. It's an expression.

GEORGIA

(shrugs) I was thinking, like, suicide. What I don't know'd fill a book.

FERN

That's not much.

MAC

[And that'll] make twenty-five years
at Terrence Allowell Middle School.
Twenty-five! Staggering!

FERN

Don't tell us about it.

MAC

Then I can reach the lower
middle-class Valhalla:
standing in line for government
cheese under Ronnie's Republican
Socialism.

FERN

Just noblesse oblige in polyester.

GEORGIA

What's good about that is the old
farts can't eat (gesturing to door)
but just a little bit of the cheese,
you know, so the middleaged kids
visit, [and they] go home in the
Cadillacs and Olds's with most
of it.

MAC

BMW children can't get all the way
home. Gets smeared all over their
perpetually greedy mouths. You'd
think they have the 'couth to write
thank-you notes to Ronald Reagan.

FERN

At the end of every pipeline a fat,
wrong mouth.

MAC

(musing) I voted for that Cheese.

FERN

Ronald Roquefort.

MAC

I was neo-something then--
conservative I guess. What's neo
mean? Like? I'm always like
something.

FERN
It means new which means old.

GEORGIA
What's your whachacallit...? I
never found out.

MAC
Nor did I.

GEORGIA
Fern?

FERN
(to MAC) Fool! His field is--

MAC
Drug Enforcement. And it should
include rubber dispensing. Should.

GEORGIA
Never mind.

FERN
You're right. Talking to him isn't
worth it.

MAC
It used to be. Even for me. Tragic.

FERN
Only when you know what's going on.

MAC
Can't even wring my hands anymore.
One can't stand the other.

FERN
'Twas inevitable. His field's
history, Georgia.

MAC
Emphatically! And if not elsewhere,
then there I do shine!

(a) DISSOLVE TO INT CLASSROOM. Energetic Mac lectures. POV
over backs of students' heads. BLACKBOARD: Emancipation
Proclamation (smeary date.)

Reverse POV and we see blank students, one sleeping.

Reverse again as MAC slams book on lectern and student wakes up in fright. Others laugh.

CUT BACK TO APT.

1 (CONT)

GEORGIA
After a while you always know, you know. That's the trouble.

MAC
The clowns don't run the circus. That's really the trouble.

GEORGIA
I aint so sure about that.
LOCAL GIRL WONDERS.

FERN
Ma'am?

MAC
Well this clowns doesn't. This clown tumbles on cue.

MAC slides off chair in half-hearted pratfall, gets up from floor to demonstrate:

MAC (cont)
Ass out of my seedy, schoolmaster pants.

(GEORGIA laughs; FERN disgusted)

GEORGIA
I just signed on to go to Vietnam War Memorial and see Jimmy's name. The stage show is a bonus.

FERN
You should've become a boozier, Mac. [It's] the way they think. Self-pity lowered to an art.

MAC
Don't know how I missed it, my sweet Fern. But I always said that art is--

GEORGIA
Don't teach. It makes me sad.

MAC
Me too. Sometimes.

GEORGIA
I can take a drink or leave it
alone. (aside) Can almost say the
same for men.

MAC
(re drinking) Drove through.
Mostly.

FERN
Few stops.

MAC
I remember.

FERN
One separation back in there.

GEORGIA
Didn't know.

FERN
Yeah, nearly a year.

MAC
[That was] for a lot of things.

GEORGIA
It usually is.

FERN
One prime one.

MAC
Wish Dad'd hurry. Getting deep out
here.

FERN
A, uh, Mexican difficulty supplied
the, excuse the expression, trigger.

MAC
You can't boil anything down.
Anything. You just can't. That's

what I found out in all these odd years. And don't I mean odd?

FERN

YOU can't.

GEORGIA

What's a Mexican difficulty?

MAC

I say yes to women in combat roles!

GEORGIA

I don't think so, but thanks. I'll let you know when we get stupid. What's a Mex--?

MAC

Snipers! Wasting us, wasting each other.

FERN

You only hurt--

MAC

the hurt you love.

GEORGIA

When I'm with husband, wife...they throw it back and forth--(shrugs, shakes head).

FERN

We better or worse?

GEORGIA

'Bout the same.

FERN

Marriage toughens people up.

MAC

What doesn't strengthen me kills me.

FERN

You got that right.

MAC

World War Two never officially ended. No real peace treaty. Let's drink to it.

GEORGIA
To the war or--?

FERN
Any unfinished business.

MAC
Pregnant!

GEORGIA
Let's hope not. (aside)
Spanish fly I heard but Mex-?

FERN
Just a bad episode in our mar--

MAC
Wheels within wheels.

FERN
Bores within bores.

GEORGIA
You lost me.

MAC
Stay there. You're better off.

FERN
Somebody stirred the wrong pot, a
spicy one.

GEORGIA
You found me.

MAC
Fern!

GEORGIA
Say no more.

FERN
Georgia's practically family.
Why fart around with secrets? Deep,
deeeeeeeep and dark!

MAC
Forget it! Well maybe one more.
Another one.

FERN

The Mystery Man.

GEORGIA
I didn't know he had it in him.

FERN
He didn't either. It may have
been his finest hour.

MAC
The woman's way:

FERN
And what might that be?

MAC (CONT)
admire what you condemn.
Devastating. Devastating weapon.

GEORGIA
We gotta have something.

FERN
Anyway, it died soon after.

MAC
That was murder.

FERN
We do what we have to do, no matter
how much it hurts.

MAC
Do tell?

GEORGIA
That's war too, family war, lover
war. So what's the big deal?

MAC
Later. And you'll both agree it IS a
big deal.

FERN
How priggish his replies are!

MAC
At any rate, The old war's quaint,
the real one. Old Deuce I mean.
It's a black and white movie and
even though the guys move at the
right speed it's--

FERN

The quaint gassing of Jews.

GEORGIA

Why don't we change the subjects?

MAC

Even the cold war...that's...it's got that old look.

FERN

Easier to forget we fried our own two then. One a mother.

GEORGIA

I wasn't paying attention, I guess.

FERN (cont)

Living color would have prevented that. Sorry, Georgia, I keep tuning up the racist kind of notes.

GEORGIA

Hey! Be my guest. Some of my best friends belong to a race, or are planning to join one after the first of the year. You know, like a diet. You--

MAC

never leave the obvious unsaid. TV influence.

GEORGIA

You should know.

FERN

Everybody knows. That's why nothing can get done.

GEORGIA

If you say so, Fern.

MAC

Color in Korea but muddy, grainy.

FERN

(softly) The visual bore, a new stunning, technological variety.

Has studied the medium. Bound to win on DATING GAME if the other two gentlemen drop dead.

GEORGIA

It was the whatchacallits back there, in Korea I mean, rice paddles.

MAC

Whatever you say, Georgia.

FERN

But if you watch too long they won't let you watch anymore.

MAC

Huh! More you watch less you know. But Nam brought it home. Didn't it? Whammo! You could smell the fear.

GEORGIA

Yeah, like Monday Night Football.

FERN

Just don't be a Jew. Or a black.

GEORGIA

Live and let live. Anyways I flunked that history that you're so fond of, Mac. They never gave us t-shirts [the] way they do now.

MAC

We try everything.

FERN

We all do. When you don't get a black eye it's a triumph.

MAC

I was only beat up the once.

FERN

Oh? Why haven't you told me about it?--more than a thousand times that is.

MAC

Closer to fifty-eight thousand--a

little inside joke you'll both get later.

GEORGIA
Oh? Another one? Just a gag a minute 'round here.

MAC
What was that old show? "I've got a secret."

FERN
I doubt that.

MAC
You aint seen nothing yet!

FERN
I'm intrigued. At least I think that's what this is.

MAC
In a pitch dark hallway after a dance (muses) the moons of balloons, the heat in the gym like Bataan.

(b) DISSOLVE TO MAC from rear walking through dance described, teens locked into slow number. Camera follows him into locker room, but when he turns corner he's out of frame. Sounds of his being slammed into locker, and repeatedly struck.

1 (CONT) CUT TO CU GEORGIA
GEORGIA
(soundlessly mouth forms) Bataan?

BEATING SOUNDS STILL IN BG, slowly fade under MAC'S words.

MAC
Like I said it was pitch dark--all hammering and snorting. Couldn't even tell his race, but I hurt the hell out of his fists.

FERN
The way people pronounce motherfu--

GEORGIA
You are bad, Fern!

FERN (CONT)

says a lot about them.
Especially nuns.

MAC

He didn't pronounce anything.

FERN

I read that in Emily Post once.

GEORGIA

She never came out of the rain.

MAC

Fern or Emily Post?

GEORGIA

Fern looks dry to me.

MAC

Alas.

FERN

What's the hell's that supposed to mean?

MAC

What a great phrase! Fern!--
Georgia too!

GEORGIA

Thanks.

MAC

Why it's the greatest question of
our time! What's anything supposed
to mean! Not what DOES it mean
but--?

GEORGIA

We hear you! We hear you!

MAC

Supposed to.

FERN

The teacher teaches till the last
classroom dog dies.

GEORGIA

It's too much for me. Tell me once or forget it.

MAC
I'll remember that. I will. Truly. Promise. I really do promise.

FERN
Tiresome. Tedious. Titleless.

MAC
Not as I get older. A training bra wouldn't be amiss. The final feminization of the middle aged man in our time: he grows tits.

FERN
Useless, appropriately enough.

GEORGIA
(re Father) I think he's singing in there.

Camera travels to door, lingers until GEORGIA does Mae West.

FERN
That's what happens when you forsake sex for television.

GEORGIA
I aint ready yet...but I wouldn't mind the whatchacallit, free cheese.

MAC
He got a snappy cheddar once.

CUT TO GEORGIA who has risen into bumps and grinds.

GEORGIA
(a la Mae West) Just how did it... uh...snap?

MAC
(circus barker) The incomparable Mae West!

FERN
Might as well get a laugh out of it.

GEORGIA
Why not?

MAC

Laughter's the name of a station on
the way to--what? Tragic Mess?

FERN

More like the one after.

GEORGIA

So what's the choice then?
Fuck it. Oh excuse me.

MAC

Apt language needs no excuse.

FERN

Maybe not, but a fuck's out of place
in this house.

MAC

I should hope. What would mother
say?

FERN

Less than usual--being dead as
usual.

MAC

You never know.

GEORGIA

I have a little hunch the senior
citizen in there wouldn't object.

MAC

He'd have to tie a string to it to
find it.

GEORGIA

I bet he would though. Find it.

FERN

I refuse to participate in
speculation quite THIS boring.

GEORGIA

...out of place? How can you get
one out of place?

FERN

In lots of houses really.

MAC

Stop hinting. It's not impotence,
it's exhaustion. Deeper today.
Deepened today. Ex-haussssss-tion.

GEORGIA

Never your brother's problem.

MAC

No, he was an enthusiast.
Unburdened by deep thoughts.

GEORGIA

Lot smarter than you think.

FERN

Very. Too smart to bother with
alleged deep thoughts. Man of
instinct in a world of wimpy
schemers.

MAC

Yeah? Well, what'd it get him?
Jimmy? Name on that black wall
we're going to. Wasted in Nam.
Well what the hell! He'd be fat and
forty now. With a rumbling belly...

GEORGIA

(burps exaggeratedly)

MAC

(CONT) Popping Tums. Jesus Christ
when you think of it!

GEORGIA

Yeah? And where's your name? Or
mine? On what wall?

MAC

A point. Maybe it was worth it
after all. Fame. Fuckin fame!

FERN

Thank God I don't have any children
to lose, so fat old men could grow
maudlin afterwards while shoveling
in New York Cuts and sucking up
champagne.

MAC

We'd go to the wall for that.

FERN

Hah hah.

GEORGIA

Shit! I'm forty too. I mean also.
Almost.

MAC

He thought Vietnam was a cause.
Jimmy. Or he didn't care. He
wasn't one of those against the war,
tortured by the ambiguities or--

FERN

A cause my ass! How about Georgia
here? Isn't she a cause?

GEORGIA bows.

FERN (CONT)

How about the babies they might've
had? Stupid asshole male word.

MAC

I didn't make the dictionary. I'm
not Webster Johnson.

GEORGIA

I don't know about that. I mean,
like, babies I--

FERN

You were planning to get mar--

GEORGIA

I would've got Jimmy for some more.
That's all. You could never think
about nothing lasting with him.
It wasn't his way.

MAC

Whatever.

FERN

The teacher determines that the
subject is barren.

MAC

No, it's Jimmy. Just J--

FERN
And we fire blanks, poor us,
while...wanting something he had--

MAC
I guess.

FERN (CONT)
and yet he was some kind of moral
idiot.

MAC
Fern!

FERN
All I remember.

GEORGIA
Different is all. Moral, schmoral.
(shrugs)

FERN
Whichever foggy memory. We must, at
any rate, go look at his name on a
stupid wall. Heroes on the mall or
below the mall or whatever. And
there's naturally controversy so
they put up a statue too, believe it
or not. Some found the wall too
flatly blackly awful.

MAC
You don't have to go. You or
Georgia. I'll just go with Pop
and--

GEORGIA
I'll go along with it if we can get
going!

FERN (to MAC)
Why don't you just move that other
ball of fire along?

MAC
Hey give the old guy a break. He
doesn't want the hair from his ears
to flare in the sunlight. "Look at
the old fart!" they'd say. Listen,
you can hear the clip-clip in there.

FERN

You can.

GEORGIA

(fiddling with knobs on radio)
It supposed to be one of those days,
partly sunny, partly cloudy...I
don't know. You listen to that
maniac in the morning? The Squirrel
Cage? "Hey man! Hey ma'am! Roll
your buns out and show em to a
gor-gor-GORGEOUS morning! Catch a
wave in that there ole water bed,
and right over your sweet sweet
sweet cuh-uh-uhm-puh-LETELY sweet
one!" Kills me!

MAC

Too many maniacs have come and gone,
some even on FM.

GEORGIA

Well this one's crazy altogether.
I'm in a contest to win a date with
him.

FERN

Into each life some silly fun must
rise. It's critical.

MAC

He may well prove to be the sleazy
diarrhea mouth of your dreams.

GEORGIA

Something like that.

MAC

We live in cheap times. I was for
all the freedom but it came out
ninety percent sleaze. Ninety-nine.

FERN

You never even heard the guy.

MAC

I don't have to. The air is full of
bullshit. You just have to listen.

GEORGIA

I'm listening.

MAC
Or just walk around. It even enters
your pores. They'd use their
mothers.

GEORGIA
Finals are wet t-shirt.

FERN
It's a lock.

FADE OUT

(d) FADE IN INT BAR. GEORGIA in wet t-shirt and sultry gaze
walks directly into camera which ultimately tilts in
fuzziness before FADE OUT.

1 (CONT) FADE IN on transfixed MAC, since it was
his daydream

MAC
I'd...be glad to support you.

FERN
But you're afraid to knock on a
door. Spreading Romeos have a
narrow courage channel. Excuse the
flaccid attempt at language.

GEORGIA
Keep talking. I don't hear it much.
Even if it's bad it's good.

MAC
No it's not. Uh uh. (Knocks) Dad,
we really should get moving. Might
be crowds much later on you know.
(turning around) They're going to
have a flag with more than
fifty-eight thousand roses, Georgia!

GEORGIA
Fifty--?

MAC
One for each.

FERN

How fair. We truly ARE equal in death.

GEORGIA
Lot of good guys lost.

MAC
Would you rather be a communist?

GEORGIA
I don't give a shit.

MAC
The failure of education rears its ugly head once more.

GEORGIA
Ugly? I don't think I like that.

FERN
Don't you see your life'd be terrible, Georgia? It'd be just the same.

GEORGIA
So what else is new?

FERN
Rich getting richer equals blood in the streets. White men never learn. Anywhere. Anytime.

MAC
Fern dropped Political Science. A Republican was mentioned in the textbook.

GEORGIA
I don't know about all that. But there's one rose for Jimmy. One for Jimmy. (half sob)

FERN
Mama, pin on rose on this country, let it rot and rot there till the stink is unbearable.

GEORGIA
Who cares 'bout...all that shit? Jimmy is all.

MAC

(to FERN) Try a little less hard.
It's a mistake to rely completely on
hatred in the personal or the larger
life, generally speaking.

FERN
How else? Sorry if we get too--

GEORGIA
Sure. Hey! Even with lovebirds it
aint always singing all the time.

MAC
(mutters) Tell me about it.

FERN
At any rate, getting back to this
rock of fundamental values, 'twas
nary a sound from the inner sanctum.
But a communication nonetheless
between father and son through heavy
mahogany.

MAC
He's coming.

FERN
Every family has its quiet madness.

MAC
Every once in a while you get to
hear it--but you must listen.

GEORGIA
It's better believe me. [In] mine
they're always screaming.

FERN
There was never screaming here.
Uh uh.

MAC
Where the door'd hold it in, not
like the cardboard excuses for doors
in our so-called unit.

FERN
Secrets are the big deal here, of
course. Hide the little things,
hide the big things. Who's queer.
Who took the last brownie.

MAC

I got the last brownie so I guess that lets me off the other hook. Yeah, in our place you're caught every time. Radar, sonar. I can see that brownie up on a screen like a geometry example or something. Blow job be at least a hologram.

GEORGIA

What's a blow job?

MAC

Unit! Shit! Sounds vaguely Soviet. Our Germantown unit!

GEORGIA

Old hippies never die. They just move to Germantown.

FERN

What do you mean VAGUELY Soviet, Mac?

GEORGIA

We are living in the U. S. of A.--last time I looked. But I haven't seen your unit of course.

MAC

You don't know what you're missing.

FERN

So...we're saving our money to build. And we will insist on doors too. Pay the extra. It's worth it.

MAC

Another fiction. They keep raising the prices. While they're fuckin you good in the land of the free, they keep asking each other, "How can we fuck him more?"

GEORGIA

Yeah, THEY have conferences.

FERN

What do you expect? Got to keep niggers and women and teachers in their place. The system works.

GEORGIA

Not to mention route salespersons.
I get an increase sheet every few
months it seems like. It's getting
so that even in the mom and pop
stores I gotta let pop put his hand
on my ass when I'm stocking the
rack.

MAC

It knows its place.

FERN

Where's mom?

FAST PAN to befuddled MAC

MAC

What!?

FERN

[She's] not keeping up with the
times.

MAC

Right! Uh, lucky pop! Oooops, too
loud. The old dandy'll think we
mean him.

GEORGIA

Maybe we do, in a way.

FERN

(to MAC) Almost got caught, didn't
you?

MAC

Not for your reasons unfortunately.

GEORGIA

Got a special on Dandy Cakes if
you're interested.

FERN

Mac's always interested. Beginning
with food.

MAC

I'm not dead yet.

GEORGIA
(CONT) And a deal on a batting
helmet with the Dandy cakes
whatchacallit --thinger,
label-like...?

MAC
Logo.

FERN
Just brain dead.

GEORGIA
(distant) A vegetable might be
interesting. "SEX WITH A
VEGETABLE-- a Star exclusive!"

FERN
How about a couch potato? Take him
off my hands? Send a future draft
choice. Anything that doesn't
whine. Dandy, randy, you name it.

GEORGIA
You could have had my Phillie
baseball player before he dumped me.
Oooooops, he's hurt.

MAC
No! Hemingway-Macho-boy--that's me.
Shoulder to shoulder with Rambo,
breaking up fights in the cafeteria,
submitting a flawless photocopied
report. All guts and a yard wide.

FERN
At least.

(e) CUT TO EXT SCENE OUTSIDE SCHOOL BUS, SNOWING. Mac, with
clipboard, is pulling kids off bus labeled TO MUSEUM to
check their names. A young black woman with a sort of
spiky hair style assists him. She has an ID suspended
from a neck chain.

There are about a dozen black boys, all dressed in puffy
parkas. They won't cooperate, so MAC and the woman pass some
between them roughly. One takes a swing at the back of MAC'S
head, misses, and ends up sort of turtling on the snow.
The woman tries to pick him up and he resists. She tugs
fiercely until exhaustion.

At the end we see MAC and woman head on, both played out.

REVERSE POV to see bus departing, a banner flaps on its rear but we can't read it, until camera catches up to bus.

The banner reads: EXCELLENCE!

FADE OUT

1 (CONT) FADE IN APT

MAC

Wouldn't even know how to complain.
'd need to take lessons no kidding.

FERN

Not any more, king-oh-SAH-bee.

MAC

Girl's college somewhere--that's
where the major'd be.

FERN

Hostile bastards of the world unite.
You've nothing to lose but--aw hell,
you've already lost.

MAC

We just wait, then grab a little
back, grab a little back. Little
more. Then before you know it--

GEORGIA

I never got past high school. You
know the principle that's enough.

MAC

You got that right.

GEORGIA

I mean the basic crap.

FERN

Let's just knock off the male-female
stuff.

MAC

Hadn't noticed.

FERN

We're hysterical and you guys keep a stiff upper chin: that'll settle it.

MAC

Sometimes I fall quite in love with your nastiness. Still--

FERN bows to MAC.

MAC (CONT)

there's a surprise in it even after all this time. You like surprises, too, don't you, Fern?

FERN

No. Yes. Rapturously. They make me gag.

MAC

Your attitudes recall so much. And that so-much in turn--

GEORGIA

Everything reminds him of something else. How does he do it?

MAC

Thinking. S'called thinking. I think.

FERN

The macho stuff is charming when it's harmless, in situations when it doesn't count. But when the chips are down there has to be some some central you.

MAC

I'm hoping for something. Cause the chips they is honest-to-God down!

FERN

Oh?

GEORGIA

That wakes me up. What bullshit haven't you told us, Mac?

MAC

Forget it for now.

FERN

Forever.

MAC

At any rate, inside every hard-blooded man there's an absolute sweetie. Am I correct?

GEORGIA

Then how come I meet the absolute pricks? Excuse again. LOSERS WRECK GIRL'S LIFE. A Mirror Exclusive.

FERN

Don't be a lady here. It's not becoming.

MAC

Anyway, Georgia, you haven't looked inside me yet.

GEORGIA

Thanks but no thanks.

FERN

Mac, you're fat and stink of middle-aged desperation. So knock off the mawkish flirting.

GEORGIA

It's okay.

FERN

Uh uh.

MAC

What else can I do? I'm driven.

FERN

You haven't been driven to anything except butter pecan ice cream in at least two years.

GEORGIA

Hey, you can turn into that stuff.

MAC

Then I'll devour myself.

FERN

Well, don't flirt first. People want to keep their food down.

GEORGIA
If you ate yourself your mouth'd have to be left, so you can't. If you think about it you can't do it.

MAC
(incredulous) How about them Phillies!

GEORGIA
Don't remind me! Ballplayers should never be married. It oughta be against the law.

MAC
Does it stop you?

GEORGIA
No, but sometimes you think about it.

FERN
A little guilt, a little seasoning.

GEORGIA
I wouldn't mind the guilt if I didn't worry about it.

MAC
That's Catholic.

GEORGIA
I don't know what it is.

FERN
It's Georgia

GEORGIA
(wistful) Georgia here, Georgia, there, everywhere everywhere Georgia.

FERN
There may be something in that.

MAC
I don't follow.

FERN

That's not like you.

MAC

One mistake I made! Jesus Christ!

GEORGIA

You must be a saint.

MAC

I have painted the basement stairs!
I have even tarred, though not
feathered, the roof. How much
penance is penance?

FERN

That depends on your transgressions,
not just the times you're caught.

MAC

You're not interested in the whole
picture anyway, just the part you
can squeeze and squeeze the ball on.

FERN

(re his handyman bit) People who
don't do much make a great, smashing
show when they do anything at all.

MAC

Drama! It's the best we can do just
running on one ball.

FERN

How painful for you.

GEORGIA

Stop complaining. You got one left.
(laughs)

MAC

Verified. Got in the way last time
I fished for the soap.

GEORGIA

Huh! Men are lucky.

FERN

You take your romance where you can
get it I guess.

GEORGIA

One of those freakin Phillies and he was married?

(f) CUT TO perky GEORGIA chasing a baseball player up a runway.

We hear only the huge buzz from inside the stadium. He turns around to wait for her, gives her a perfunctory hug. When she tries a warmer embrace he pushes her off. She manages to cling and implore him. He spits out a few words, spins around and runs up the ramp.

1 (CONT) DISSOLVE TO XCU crying GEORGIA

GEORGIA

(CONT) I poured my whole stupid heart out, you know? He says at the end: "Take two and hit to right." Stinking little--

MAC

You gotta compete with cute little stews forget it.

GEORGIA

I have, believe me. The prick!

FERN

At any rate, it's good to have something in mind when you negotiate about the grimy basement stairs.

MAC

Nobody sees them.

FERN

Just you. Just me.

GEORGIA

I'll look! [I'll] come over some Sunday while you're watching the Eagles. Fern and I can exchange Bloody Mary recipes. What color'd you make them?

MAC

What was on sale?

GEORGIA

What was that?

MAC

I can't remember. We buy everything on sale. There's nothing to contrast it against.

(sniffs) Do I sense the magnum Old Spice douse? That's pretty much the last step in a series of about a hundred, right? That means the moment is right.

FERN

Or ripe.

GEORGIA

To blow this stupid old place.

MAC

Bug out like a big-assed bird--

FERN

Haven't heard that for a century at least.

MAC

(CONT) (broadcaster's voice)
for the famous or infamous monument
in our nation's capital! The names
of the war dead on the black wall,
covered with a flag made of,
count'em!--58,000 roses!

(his own voice) After a very very
interesting and most intriguing
stop--fortunately or unfortunately.

GEORGIA

I thought we were--?

FERN

Driving straight to the monument?
We'd better be.

MAC

Since you're already sitting down--

GEORGIA

We picking up the president first?
At the White House? Poop! I
could've worn my new red frock.

MAC
Mom.

FERN
Uh huh.

MAC
Mother!

GEORGIA
"Sweetly remembered." [A] card.
"From her loving son and
daughter-in-law." Or one of those
little ads in the paper? Little
angels and whatchacallits, wreaths:
"Departed this world on--"

MAC
Have to pick her up, believe
it or not.

FERN
Yeah. Sure. We'll throw her ashes
against the wall.

GEORGIA
Right! Great whatchcallit?
Symbolism. Where's whochacallit?
Walter Cronkite when you need him.

MAC
For better or for worse, only way to
say it is to say it.

FERN
Do tell?

MAC
She's, uh, ALIVE. Mom is.

GEORGIA
Of course she is. How dumb of us
not to know.

FERN
As the judge said, "Bullshit, next
case."

MAC

No. Seriously.

GEORGIA

Now I know you're kidding, [if] you can even get that word into your mouth.

MAC

I'm not always fooling around. Can get as grim as life itself. As right now.

GEORGIA

Don't. Just keep making jokes, even lame freakin ones.

FERN

Just cut it out, Mac! This is stupid stupid stupid. Don't always keep straining to come up with perverse gags. Think of your blood pressure.

MAC

Dad called me into the bedroom when we came, threw Georgia out.

GEORGIA

Too bad. I was only in there a couple of minutes but he was beginning to talk a good game. Old man's tease--you don't pay no attention. I can always tell when there's something behind that stuff.

It's sad. (musing) All these guys thinking they're all cool.

MAC

That's your intellectuality-- forged in flirting.

GEORGIA

If you say so.

FERN

He'll say anything. Tell me it's an idiot lie about Mom. Shit, listen to me! I know it's--

GEORGIA

Now don't get shook up Fern. You're my whatchacallit, rock.

MAC

Since then [I've been] deciphering what you two've been saying, like through a filter, and all the while trying to think of a way [to] tell--

GEORGIA

We don't talk in no code. Maybe you do.

MAC

I said it as clearly as I could. Mother did not die. She is actually alive. You must have questions.

FERN

Uh huh? Yup. Sure! This is too SICK even for you, Mac. You might get the butterfly net before your burnout.

MAC

(to FERN) Evidently not for him. Pop. Sick enough that is. She's at Bide a Bit. He put her in there for diet pill addiction.

FERN

I've seen the ashes, anyway the urn, you asshole! I'm not listening!

GEORGIA

Be a man, Fern. Listen to the latest load of shit. Try some. You'll like it.

MAC

He...bought...pretended. And then he...couldn't see...way out. And she evidently decided to go along--in her lucid moments.

GEORGIA

And the farmer took another load away. I had an uncle always said that. He shook all over when he said it. But that was cause he had gotten sick. Not, uh, because, uh...

MAC

Whatever, what fuckin ever!

GEORGIA

(CONT) I mean not the whatchacallit, subject.

MAC

Even for this crowd you're rattling.

FERN

Uh huh, Mac. If it were true you'd be doing the rubber wall routine while tearing out your hair. So knock it off. You had your fun.

MAC

You'd better knock it off to save time. I'm serious. I am serious. I gave you the fact.

GEORGIA

Just the fact, Ma'am.

FERN

Let's just get Pop and go-oh!

MAC

That won't change anything. Mother is alive! Mother...is...alive! No shit! Doesn't it just blow you fuckin away?

GEORGIA

You're not kidding. He's not kidding, Fern. Is he kidding? Fern?

MAC

Unfortunately, or fortunately, no. And it's making me sick to my stomach, the whole thing.

GEORGIA

Got some Malox in my purse.

FERN

[It's making] YOU sick? Even as a joke it's double-ugly. I knew you were a crazy fuckin tribe but--

GEORGIA

He IS kidding. Good! And now he's stuck with it and won't let go. Once you start lying it's murder. Ask an expert.

MAC

Way he explained it, Pop, she she she had this spell and he panicked, you know? And he ran out and telegraphed us on vacation. Mexico. Cause he thought she was dead.

GEORGIA

Uh huh. Keep it going. My favorite men were liars. Geez...

FERN

You could tell because their lips moved.

GEORGIA

(CONT) think about that for a minute.

MAC

Uh, we, of course, got the message a week and a half late in Mexico or we didn't look at it if it was delivered before that. Things were a mess you may recall. Suspended animation.

GEORGIA

MESS IN MEXICO STIRS POT--New York Post. ZOMBIES WATCH.

FERN

Shush for just a minute, Georgia. We have our own little tabloid here. I want to get to the bottom of this particular pot. It's not dear dead decaying old mom, but it's something. I know it's something. Something else. Probably just an depraved excuse for some even sicker shit.

GEORGIA

I'll go get my shovel.

FERN

[To] get our attention like a little kid. Like Pop with his empty ice cream carton.

MAC

Don't I wish?

GEORGIA

(giggles) WEIRD TEACH SLICES BALONEY ON MOM'S DEATH. No, they'd say exit or something, The Post would, not The Globe. I'm sorry, Fern, kinda slipped out. I'll behave, but it's hard to behave when you're, like, down into somebody's grim shit or somebody's pulling your leg and you don't know which, you know? Shit! [This is] getting me all excited! Shows you where my life's been. Bore-town.

MAC

When--since I trust you want to listen to more of this, Fern--he got back to the house, uh, he had called the undertaker who called the cops for some reason.

(g) CUT TO old woman fighting as described below--Except we don't see FATHER. HE IS NEVER SEEN! Scene is silent with the three voices over.

MAC(CONT)

She she she was anyway raving at them all by then, and kicked and even gouged a couple of cops I'm given to understand, and well--

FERN

Sure. They tried to impound her Godiva Chocolates.

MAC

Go ahead. Keep sticking up your little screens!

FERN

As long as you hold on to your big one.

GEORGIA
You go ahead, Mac. I'm waiting.
This is gonna be my favorite soap
opera from now on.

AT THIS POINT COPS ARE DRAGGING MOM OFF.

MAC
He had her committed.
Some doctor he went to high
school with.

DISSOLVE TO CU FERN

1 (CONT)

FERN
That I WOULD believe. In another
context that is. An old boy network
to ease the wives out.

GEORGIA
It's been effective. You should
hear the phonecalls I get after they
salt 'em away.

FERN
I don't believe a lying word.

GEORGIA
(pretended) I'm hurt.

MAC
As you wish. So-o, she was cremated
or wasn't cremated in that delay
time, before we got or looked at the
news sent to us in Mexico. Therefore
we missed or didn't miss the
funeral, depending on the version
you prefer.

Maybe there's no difference.

GEORGIA
Well that much is nice. I mean if
you didn't miss, uh, anything
anyways, uh--what's that mean? What
I just SAID, I mean? You guys

notice if I'm speaking English or not? Let me know, okay?

FERN

I'm slapping myself. Gotta wake up. Don't listen anymore, Georgia. He's finally lost it. All that burnout talk wasn't kidding. Gone.

MAC

That wasn't and THIS isn't! Now goddammit it's the truth and let's deal with it!

FERN

Good Jesus! I don't-- If you're not kidding I--

MAC

You're getting there, Fern. Now just hold onto things! Don't want to lose you. I don't think I can handle everything all by myself today. We were just going to go down to the monument in Washington when we walked into this house.

GEORGIA

[That was] my dumb understanding.

MAC

That alone'd take the starch from your legs, without this.

FERN

(attempts to choke him; he evades)
Lose me? You'll be the one lost.
[I'll] choke you and your imbecile father too if-- And I'm not fuckin kidding!

MAC

He, uh, said that since we had our own troubles when we got back from Mexico, that he thought that--uh, more convenient to--

GEORGIA

I'm getting an awful feeling about all of this. Pukey even.

FERN

Oh yes! Leave her dead in our MINDS. There's a sort of, kind of, logic. Let's call it that. Logic.

Just so we have some kind, kind of word. We need a word, that's all. It's all bullshit anyway but if we get the right word we'll get an insight into the depravity. Maybe into the bullshit too. Or the vile bullshitter.

Too bad it's not worth it. Anyway anyway anyway! [if] we get that, that word, we'll...we can take a step.

Step! Logic! Perverted, but we can call it that for convenience. Sometimes it's just getting the right WORD. Straighten out your whole life if--

MAC

He visited her last week and just let it drop we're going to Washington to see Jimmy's name on Vietnam Veterans' Wall and she flew into a fit. He had to promise to--

GEORGIA

I think I remember she liked roses.

FERN

Cut it out! Don't play into his slimy hands.

GEORGIA

I thought you was kidding too. I still do. Craziest shit I ever heard. What kind of people'd--?

MAC

She mostly doesn't remember anybody, but--

FERN

I'm not listening. There's always trouble enough without bullshit. I stopped believing. It won't compute.

GEORGIA

The bullshit is the trouble.

MAC

Not guilty. Maybe for the first time.

GEORGIA

I'm beginning to believe you, Mac, but I don't know why. If you wanted to get somebody you got me. So now tell the truth.

FERN

Let's concentrate on poor Jimmy and just forget all this-- Maybe we should buy roses of our own.

MAC

Then you'd have to buy some for Mom too. You know how she is.

FERN

Was.

GEORGIA

Get 'em anyways. I love flowers.

FERN

We'll...stick 'em in her urn.

GEORGIA

Jimmy! Jesus! There's so much I can talk to her about now--I mean as a kid, Jimmy.

FERN

Georgia! Don't you know that he's--?

MAC

Her doctor thinks it may be key: Jim.

FERN

Key? Key? No key to a madhouse! I concluded that long ago. But, again, let's just back right up, Mac. You have definitely had us on. All right? Best job you've ever done in fact. You demonstrate talent in that arena. Mix in a

little cruelty, more than a little,
you come up to the top of your
pornographic form.

GEORGIA

Super Bowl.

MAC

Why thank you both. But I don't
deserve it.

GEORGIA

Be a kick meeting her again after
all these years. Or would be.
Shit, listen to me! Come on
somebody! Tell the freakin truth!
I'll start chewing my nails again
and I broke it.

Excuse me, Fern, I'm sorry but I
think I believe him. It's just
crazy is all. Big Crazy, but
"crazy" I can figure out.

Habit I mean, biting nails, kicked
the habit.

MAC

I've been kicked. Believe me.

FERN

(kicking at him) YOU aint seen
nothing yet! Now I want it stopped
now! It's tense anyway without
this, this, this insanity! Way out
of hand!

GEORGIA

Why blame Mac? It's that old
churchmouse in there.

FERN

All right. I'm sick of this. I'll
call the bluff and right now! I'll
fuckin CALL it all right!

GEORGIA

You sure got a fire going under her
vocabulary.

FERN

I've got to get this this this
QUARTER-assed explanation again and
then I want to phone the doctor at
Bide a Bit, and then, Georgia's
right and I am going to murder that
incompetent asshole slicking down
his few hairs in there if any of
this shit is true.

GEORGIA
You'd be acquitted. Mercy Killing.
"TV News 2 reporting from this
modest apartment house in Northeast
Philadelphia--"

FERN
But you'll stop me before your fraud
is uncovered. I know you.

MAC
It's taken a lot out of him to
finally own up. Years grew into
each other and she got sicker I
guess. He surely wanted to tell us
earlier.

GEORGIA
Five years aint much as these
things go.

FERN
Not much?! These things?! What
things?!

GEORGIA
I don't know. COULD'VE gone on
longer. Why not? Anything could.
(shrugs, whispering) Just wanna make
conversation.

FERN
He...telegraphed us in Mexico--?
Five? years ago.

MAC
It was a mess then and we both know
it, mostly my fault--

GEORGIA
Fuck that now. It fades into
whatchacallit, insignificance.
Nooky and tortillas. Who cares?

It's no big deal anymore.

MAC

(CONT) but the present mess is a little bit our fault too. We we didn't seem receptive I guess. Or he would've told--

GEORGIA

Yeah, waiting for the right moment.

FERN

RECEPTIVE? RECEPTIVE? You're as crazy as he is! (breaks into shaking, sobbing fit)

GEORGIA

Now see what you've done? True or not, it's far enough to take your stupid--

MAC

I had a duty. People get hurt. It can't be helped.

GEORGIA

Tell me about it. I'm all for you guys doin' your kind of duty-- about four thousand miles away from me.

FERN

I can't believe such a thing. My mind refuses to believe such a thing. It cannot hold it! It-- Nobody says his wife died and then--

GEORGIA

A first. Guinness Book.

MAC

Come on now. Try to get ahold of yourself, Fern. You can get used to anything.

GEORGIA

Been spying on me again.

FERN

Sure! Sure! Resilient! Get smashed to shit forever and ever and that's what they call it! I'd go

[if I] had legs left. I'd get the hell out of here and never come back. Never! You'd never see stupid Fern again!

MAC

Yelling doesn't help, Honey.

GEORGIA

Speaking of getting used to things? Don't I know it? Shit I've gotten used to so much. But this one's a special category, don't you think? Specially to ole Fern here.

MAC

Yeah it is, but you've gotta think about it, how a person can actually dig himself in, and not know how to--I mean a private person like Pop. Hey! It's not only possible, it fuckin happened!

GEORGIA

That's too private, but, I don't know. I know it's stupid but I feel better about things.

Jimmy--I don't know--Jimmy's got a mama.

FERN

(rising sobs, yet sort of angry-sarcastic) It touches you.

MAC

Right. And that's good!

FERN

No! You LET it touch you [it] makes you crazy. Rips and rips and you can't get away from it! You can't help it. It's not your fault. It isn't my fault! It isn't my fault!

MAC

And who the hell said--?

GEORGIA

What the hell?

MAC

I'll...grant you that it's disturbing. But why be a martyr over a couple of old fools? We anyway gotta start living with it. And the soon--

FERN

Disturb--?

GEORGIA

(with photo album) I'm gonna bring this and ask her. We can talk all the way to D. C.

MAC

Good. That should help break the ice.

FERN

Ice. Polar. Family. Jesus Christ! How many years?

GEORGIA

Five you already said. Coffee, Fern? You had coffee. How bout tea? Pop--

FERN

Ugh!

GEORGIA

(CONT) got one of those kinds for the nerves? MAC?!

FERN

Both fuckin batty.

MAC

I'll ge[t]-- Fern? Tea? (waits for response) Gotta get back to everyday, Honey. Routine--I don't know--stops everything from, from from shaking loose.

FERN

Loose. Holy shit. Loose. Loose. F-f-f-f-f-fuckin loose.

MAC

That's right.

GEORGIA

I'm looking for ones where you're together, you and Jimmy.

MAC

It's bad, awful bad, Honey, but this is our opportunity to come to grips with it.

GEORGIA

Hey! Proof of the pudding's at Bide a Bit. I'm sick of all the talk. Fuckin happy I never got to college. Not as a student anyways--climbed some drainpipes.

FERN

Jesus Christ don't rattle!

MAC

Let's not make a federal case.

GEORGIA

Here's, uh, one of Mom must be before she went in. Fat. I can see the diet pills.

(She shows photo of fat woman in fur coat.)

CU OF PHOTO

MAC

No shit? In the picture?

GEORGIA

I mean the reason. If I aint rattling.

MAC

You've lost me.

FERN

A federal case! A federal case [is] nothing!

GEORGIA

O The hell with it. I can't tell which is which on these freakin ponies.

MAC

Let me see. This is me. No no wait a minute. Yeah, yeah, that's right. I can remember the little sort of sun suits we wore back then and how I didn't wanna wear--sissy I thought. God this is a relic. This is the last these kinda guys came around with a pony. Take your picture on the pony? Enterprising. Where'd that stuff go?

FERN

Into the black hole, asshole.
With with with with federal case.

MAC

Try to be a good sport about things Fern.

FERN

(inarticulate.)

CLOSE SHOT finds FERN growing quite still now, depressed shock overtaking the tears.

GEORGIA

So sweet. Jimmy's little mouth.
(pointing out picture)

FERN (uncomprehending) Sport?

MAC

(He breaks in the following, but rallies toward the end.)

Both our mouths. You couldn't tell from only that. And Pop's got Marine picture round here somewhere. Saigon, some leave he had before... dress uniform. Sharp. Sword.

Whole bit. He's anyway tough-looking, hard...but still the, you know, sweet mouth. Couldn't be cruel.

Sometimes I think we're twins. Almost like, I mean. And when I see

the wall, my own face in the midst
 of all the names, the thousands
 upon thousands, my own face
 reflected there, with all the names
 behind and his name, my my my FACE
 UPON HIS NAME, I think that
 maybe that I'll see his face too,
 Jimmy's and then I'll know from him
 that everything's okay. And I will
 put my hands upon his face and my
 face too, covering up his name.
 Oh Lord!

You see because I was in school,
 college, grad, I couldn't go. I, I
 should have been the one. I should
 be dead. Oh how I wish! Like when
 I see him sitting on a pony there
 and in my thoughts and walking
 dreams--Instead, I stayed in school.

But even so I had intention [to]
 sign up. At one point [I was]
 ready to sign but didn't for some
 reason and then, after...well, I
 didn't believe in it. And I was one
 of those against the war and he was
 in it, and it tore me up. You never
 hear that about people.

I never was the same and no one was,
 here. Still does tear and why?
 Why? I mean what did I prepare for
 that it couldn't wait? Fuckin seedy
 little junior high school teacher,
 wornout tire, white all sticking
 out, the cord, that you can just
 throw away and who would care?
 Nobody gives a shit. Lousy car a
 little money.

Grubby little materialist, ass
 falling out of his pants. I I I I
 don't even think that car'll get to
 Washington no shit.

But all those things back there
 coming at you all at once. Dear
 Christ! What could you do? What
 could you do?

Too much, it was all too much for me. (muses; rallies) But this is good. Teacher, Teachers' Room, he has his little subject, you know, and his little hobby, narrow-gauge

H. O. trains ...engineer cap watching them at night...talks endlessly, happy as a pig in shit. Oh how I yearn for such simplicity. Yearn! If only it had been clean cut: and I had been afraid. I know that sounds a little foolish now--not not not that I hadn't been a little...

maybe fear turned first impulse aside I just don't know. God you can't know anything. Nothing. You can't ever really know a thing. And yet, teacher I was talking of, he ALWAYS KNOWS.

Yeah he never doubts! Knows everything he's doing and opinions [on] everything else. Simple fuckin tool!

Put em on a raft, the bunch, and send 'em out to sea. They'd be laughing [when the] sharks [were] slashing 'em to bits. Blood and froth and laughing in a wild-ass fury!

Oh Jimmy!
Oh my poor brother Jim.

FERN
(rallies, whispers) That explains it. Something.

MAC
I'm not trying to--

GEORGIA
Hey! (slamming album closed) you really should light into that weird old man when he gets out here! This

kinda sneaky stuff can rip the crap out of a person.

Secrets? Who cares? What's the big freakin deal? My tribe says everything right out. Rip-roar! What's the use of keeping it inside? We call each other every kind of whore and whoremaster you can think of. Hey! Your cards are called. Like right away.

FERN

(hoarse) His kind of tribe is quiet and mean.

MAC

Yeah. Well. Blood's thicker than water, Fern.

FERN

So is shit.

MAC

I know it's been a sort of shaky thing for you, Fern. I don't know that I'm much better but I did get the shock first and by now--

GEORGIA

(to MAC) You're still shocked. Shaking anyways.

MAC (CONT)

I don't know that it'll be all that much different. The old man says she still won't know us.

FERN

Yeah, there's very little difference between a dead person and a live person. It's in the nuances.

MAC

Come on now!

FERN

Maybe if she saw us, even the year or so after she supposedly died, she'd recognize us better. Did you

or that old asshole in there ever think of that?

MAC

Gotta leave me out of this one. My hands were washed clean. I screwed up before, I know, but this one got shoved in my face. We were going to the monument. That's all I knew.

FERN

You're like him.

MAC

Hey, I'm not like him. He may be a selfish little prick but he knows what he's doing.

GEORGIA

Now aint that respectful of your father? Him with good book in his hand every Sunday of his life. Anyways, since mama d--whatever she freakin did. It's funny when the facts aint facts. Kick in the ass really. But weird as it is it--somehow, I don't know--aint new. It aint new. Aint that the wildest shit?

MAC

Me? I'm three-quarters apart and losing it. Losing what I got left I kid you not. And this this wildest shit aint helping!

GEORGIA

You don't look no different than nobody else. You educated types you just think more about it. Or think you think--I don't know.

FERN

Your family!

MAC

Hey family is family. Mine is pretty much like anybody--

FERN

I'm not gonna let you get away with that. This this this this batshit crazy episode'll top anybody's This family! This this--!

GEORGIA

Logic you said before. Hey! I got it figured out now. Pop's afraid to come out!

MAC

Come on out now! Everybody knows. All is forgiven.

GEORGIA

Come out come out wherever you are!

FERN

(to MAC) Never! And I mean that. Get out here! You old madman! Look at me! Look at me! I'm drooling. I'm...and don't even know it. Turning into...idiot!

GEORGIA

Takes the legs right out from under. Did me. But I'm all right now. Chalk it up to experience.

MAC

(to sobbing FERN) Come on now!

GEORGIA

Maybe some aspirin?

MAC

Hey! Fern! Come on now! You should never let yourself go that far. Never! Take hold! You'll get smashed far worse than this! I know it!

FERN

There's a rule then. You got a rule. One. Congratulations. A way to deal with what couldn't even be imagined! Could never even be imagined! (furiously shakes her head) Oooooooooo! God! No!

GEORGIA

After this they could. Imagine.

MAC

Now stop! Don't start making everything worse.

GEORGIA (to FERN):

Look out or they'll grab YOU up at Bide-a-Bit.

FERN

I... wouldn't [be the] first [they take from] this crowd.

GEORGIA

Hey I'm ready now. O take me to your lovin' arms, Bide-a-Bit Crack Whacko and Booze Hospital.

MAC

Big on all addictions. They were ahead of everybody!

FERN

Jesus Christ! Let's hear it for Bide-a-Bit!

GEORGIA

(getting up awkwardly in order to act the cheerleader) Oh hoh! Hot stuff! Right! (cheering) Bide a BIT! Bide a BIT-IT-IT!

I was a cheerleader. What else, right?

MAC

Money from everywhere.

GEORGIA

Of course. Give me an M!
Give me an O!

MAC

But it's no big deal today.

GEORGIA

Crashin' on junk being the fashion, Punk!

FERN

Your mother [was a] forerunner,
fuckin pioneer. How proud we--!

MAC

I think Dad wanted to tell us much
earlier but she was ashamed.

FERN

Ashamed to be living. [I can]
understand that. Join join join
this birdhouse family and hold on by
[the] f-f-f-f- fingertips.

MAC

So who's holding on? I accepted
insanity as the mode of normal
living a long, long time ago. Think
of how many times we can kill each
Russian. The more that figure goes
up the more normal things are.

GEORGIA

Did you ever hear such shit?

FERN

No! No! Never! No!

GEORGIA

Any more normal we'll explode.

FERN

(slurred) Fuck Russians! Forget
Russians. Every little guy thinks
[he's a] big deal, like Kissinger
should call up. You think about
things like that to keep away [from
your] life.

GEORGIA

You all right, Fern? She all right?
I really think some booze'd be the
ticket. Stiff jolt.

MAC

Hey! Listen! We'll meet Mama and
it'll be hard but happy, believe me,
and--

GEORGIA

The harder the happier I always say.

I wouldn't mind a stiff drink
neither.

FERN

(rally again) MAC, you are nuts--but
I think you got something, something
lurking in there.

MAC (CONT)

and you'll be surprised how soon
you'll get used to the idea. It's
like a bad practical joke is all.

GEORGIA

Did someone mention my life?

FERN

Your family! might be the root cause
[of] world horror.

GEORGIA

Don't flip, Fern. My mother walked
the streets selling week-old
newspapers. I mean you talk about
mothers? Somebody told me she was
alive I'd run and never stop.

MAC

(re FERN) She's gone out and come
back in.

GEORGIA

Me? I'm always out. Out to lunch.

MAC

Fern got intestinal fortitude.

GEORGIA

Good, 'cause I wanna talk to her
later. Girl talk.

MAC

My family as catalyst for world
horror. Hmmm. It's irrational
enough to be true, poor Fern, but
I'm holding out for vice-versa.
Save some face.

FERN

That's always too easy.

GEORGIA

It's all, whatchacallit, relative.
Only thing I remember from school.
Taught us to say it's all relative.

MAC

That was the fashion in simpler
times. When we understood
something. (two beats) Oh God!
Jimmy. Jimmy. Jimmy.

GEORGIA

Poor ole lover--[at] least Mom's
lucky enough to be alive.

MAC

Whew! Murder to juggle the two all
right.

FERN

Yeah, Jimmy, he was a pea-brain and
he's dead.

GEORGIA

Cut it out, Fern!

FERN

I resent the Jimmies too. All the
Jimmies!

GEORGIA

Hey! You wouldn't have a good word
for God.

FERN

They don't try! Fuck 'em! Rats in
a maze. The tragedy [is that] they
think the maze is life, and they're
grateful for it. Scumballs! And
too stupid [to] know.

GEORGIA

She's been dead five times herself
today and she snaps back each time
nastier.

MAC

You got the right verb.

GEORGIA

Don't even know which one's a verb.
Oh well. What's a cat got? Lives I
mean?

FERN

Eat and shit and screw and [we're]
suppose to admire and envy that?
Or think [of] it as some sort of
innocence that's beyond our worldly
corruption? Oh my oh my.

GEORGIA

She's at it again, irregardless of
mama.

MAC

You can be tolerant. You can always
be tolerant. I always was. So he
wasn't like us. You can still be
tolerant about it.

GEORGIA

We're sure Jimmy's dead aint we? I
mean around here--?

FERN

Innocence is evil.

GEORGIA

Fern, you do turn everything upside
down. Take it easy.

FERN

I'll take it. I'll take it easy all
right. (to MAC) And I'll take my
misery over your bullshit anyday.
You have bullshit, you get
w-w-w-w-what we're having now.
It's a fuckin plague! Black death.
Lies kill! Lies kill! Lies kill!

GEORGIA

Yeah? Well say what you want about
Jimmy. He was a man!

FERN

Then God help us. Any idiot [can]
get an erection.

GEORGIA

I'm not just talking about--

MAC

We understand, Geor--

FERN

I don't. If there's such a thing as a man then it's you, Mac. Don't you see that you poor asshole? You you you went in there and fought it day by fuckin day, and now you're so exhausted you don't think you're a man anymore.

And now your father's trying to kill you off with this one, suck out the life you got left. Again. And mama's going to commence again? She gave you a vacation.

Hah! Listen to that! Listen to me! You're fuckin c-crazy, Fern!

What horrible horrible torture! Tumbling the whole fuckin wall down on us!

Oh Mac, you don't know what you are even after all these years, and some stupid...PILGRIMAGE [is] supposed to reveal something to you, some secret, oh yes!, SEEE-crit! to enable you to--go on. [To] gain some understanding. More bullshit. Like some cretinous radio preacher's little example.

There's no secret. None! You go on by doing more [of] what you've done. [Isn't that a] sensational message?

That's what a man does, and woman. [That's] called courage. Or life. Or everyday. And you don't have to be pretty with a uniform and prop sword.

GEORGIA

J-J-J-Jimmy did his own thing. He was a great guy!

FERN

Yeah! Right! So many great guys!
Don't even remember him do you?

GEORGIA

(sobs)

MAC

For God's sakes, Fern!

FERN

We don't remember him. We can
hardly remember him. Even Mac.
He's fading [from] you too. Just
natural. I can't remember mama and
she's alive. Alive! Holy shit!
Life exceeds bullshit! Such happy
happy horseshit! Even if Jimmy was
tons of substance we wouldn't--

MAC

Not true! Thousand things!

FERN

We'll good luck to you and your
thousand things. Or millions. Or
fifty-eight thousand. What do I
care? I'll give you what you want.
I'm just here to give you what you
want. My mission! You'll see!
I'll make you equal to Jimmy and
then you can forget all the nonsense
forever.

And find some peace. And find some
peace. Then we can relate to your
totally totally totally fuckin
insane crazy-fuckin-alive mother!

Camera follows FERN as she seizes Magic Marker from table,
leaps up, raises it over her head with both hands as if she is
going to plunge it into MAC.)

GEORGIA (Escalating)
No-ooooooooooooo!

Then FERN writes "MAC" in huge script on wall.

FERN

There! Your name all by itself.
 All honor [to] you! You! I'll get
 you a fuckin rose. Hey! I'll get
 you sunflower! [If there's] larger
 one than that, I'll get that. You,
 Mac! You! Life's [a] struggle, not
 [a] jerkoff smile!

GEORGIA

The old man'll shit!

MAC

Fern! For Jesus Christ's sake!

FERN

(fires marker into wall) See that!
 Ninety-five miles per hour. I'm
 another Steve Carlton!

GEORGIA

Gross!

MAC has risen abruptly.

FERN

Where you going?

MAC Hall

closet! [To get] Mr Clean!

FERN

What else?

FADE OUT

2

FADE IN

Rowhouse street and we see MAC'S older car leaving
 from rear.

ZOOM OUT to show the entire street. At about midpoint we see
 guy is still polishing car.

AT END OF ZOOM, CUT BACK TO CLOSE SHOT OF HIM INSANELY GRINNING.

We hear GEORGIA

GEORGIA

I just love this one.

CUT TO picture of JIMMY in Marine Uniform. A young man of much appetite and little intelligence.

GEORGIA (under)

(OBVIOUSLY TO PICTURE)

"Take two and hit to right."

That's what he actually said, Jimmy!

Wish you were around to beat the
livin' crap outa him!

GO TO BLACK where we hear the motor laboring

3

FADE IN

Camera follows long, tree-shaded driveway to EXT convalescent home, lingers over bright lawns, deep shadows, occasional wheelchair at odd angles etc., ends on bench under huge tree.

FERN and GEORGIA into frame to sit on bench.

FERN

Whew.

GEORGIA

Stinks in there!

FERN

Didn't even notice.

GEORGIA

That I don't believe.

FERN

The day the dead live and I should sniff? I'd have to utilize the sliver of my brain that's left. I mean, worry about mere stinks in the presence of miracles?

GEORGIA

Then you must be dead. How could you help it? Gag! Puke!

FERN

You'd expect urine, wouldn't you? This is a dead-end convalescent home isn't it? For all the P.R. that is. The TV commercials showing the old loony-tunes weaving the basket of all our dreams.

GEORGIA

Urine huh? That's piss! And it's been, whatchacallit, aging.

FERN

Appropriately enough.

GEORGIA

Ugh! I really MIGHT puke. I don't even wanna walk around--even out here. Let's go. Yuk. PISS SMELL KAYOS STARLET. Why not flatter myself? (muses) Hey Fern. Ever notice that no ugly broad is ever murdered? "The statuesque blonde" really means enormous slob who fucked the town and was starting on the outskirts when she met Mr. Wrong.

FERN

Would that life was one of you tabloids.

GEORGIA

Too weird. Life that is. Listen, what's going on in there? I mean speaking of weird.

FERN

They're still working on mama. One minute she calls Pop, Pop, and the next --

GEORGIA

Dwight somebody when I could understand her. Some old one.

FERN

Eisenhower, this time. A presidency without cheese.

GEORGIA

Christ! That was back even before Nam!

FERN

Something she didn't resolve back then. Probably when she ate a birthday cake, candles and all. And speaking of gifts.

FERN flips something aside.

GEORGIA

(puzzled) What's that?

FERN

[An] Altzeimer Honey gave it to me when we came in. I was so out of it [I] didn't notice. Little rosette of shit.

QUICK CUT to fuzzy shot of teetering old woman approaching them

CUT TO rising GEORGIA

GEORGIA

Tell her I left! (giggles)

JERKY FOLLOW SHOT as they run

GEORGIA

(standing) Now you've done it! You have duh-un it. Grossed me out. Why don't you go wash your hands at least?

FERN

(sinks to chair) When I can get up.

GEORGIA

I hope God never forgives you. I didn't think it was possible anymore for anybody to gross--

FERN

The truth'll do that. Too much of it. Gross you out good!

GEORGIA

(stares at her knees) [If] I get like that, Fern, simple, blow my brains out, will you? You have my permission.

FERN

You come and you go, Georgia. I won't know you then. And I wouldn't want to be reminded of this day in any case. So where's that leave us?

GEORGIA

But I want to. Stay friends. I do.

FERN

What for? Get away from us. We're poison. We infect.

GEORGIA

YOU'RE not.

FERN

What can I offer? Stale wisecracks. Shit. Excuse the metaphor when the real thing's so close.

I was totally bored with old Fern when this day cracked my skull open.

GEORGIA

You're excused right now, but the thing is we can talk. Even Mac.

FERN

Is that what you call it?

GEORGIA

Hey! So it's not Channel 12. In my family you scream or it's nothing. No one ever talks. I mean I'm...so lonely.

FERN

We waltz the streets of life alone.

GEORGIA

You didn't say that.

FERN

Thomas Wolfe the Former had the original impulse. I fucked it up.

GEORGIA

You're strange Fern--or wanna be.

FERN

Why I came into this family, to look normal by comparison.

GEORGIA

Well, she aint fat no more anyways. You gotta say that.

FERN

Little trembly-white old lady.

GEORGIA

A killer. Don't know what I was expecting. Somebody...younger, tell truth. I pictured Mom, the mom Jimmy introduced me to. Disapproved my makeup. Lovely without anything she said. Me! What I remember. Made her real.

Oh God if I could stuff some cotton up my nose! Hospitals scare me even though this aint one really. Makes you think about...I mean you walk around inside your body, right? Don't think about it?

And then come to place like this and nothing's really covered over here. People dying, really, right before your eyes. Some smell like dirt itself or worse.

I think about my breasts and, well it aint like like standing in a certain way make sure some guy can get a view; I mean men are crazy 'bout--You see those women on TV news, bare-breasted on some beach cause men can do it?

Hey, one says, 's only tissue. We got more of it is all. Whatsay Fern? Thissss (lifting a breast) only tissue, hey? I believe her and I don't, but gets the men completely nuts, that much I know.

But you know what I think about in all these places like this? I think about how you get cancer, breast, and have to-- Why I can't stay. 'Cause these places all are cancer and all horrible goddamn things.

Forty. Life begins. What crap! Death begins. O I get so scared. Let me tell you Fern, it's Death begins.

But Jimmy. Wow! Let me tell you. Said I didn't remember but there's one thing--but you're right. Don't 'member much--flashes.

It...Jimmy...wouldn't've gone nowhere. Know that now. Know it from the other Jimmies. All wanted [to] hang on, really. Breast. Suck, [be] babied.

Oh how you get your heart set hard on something you don't even want!

And then you die to have it, what you didn't even give two shits for first. Then you get walled-in and want the hell right out! Can't breathe!

Can't figure it. Can't figure nothing. Like you and Mac, so you aint perfect and fuck up, but you do have a hand on something, I don't know, can handle things--even this weird day which'd kill most people. And and and lunch: Mac talks to waiter, asks about the wine, whatchacallit?

"Sha-blee" the way Mac says it. Great!

Like a little island at lunch. And talk about everything under the sun.

And yet we're heading to this awful place all the freakin time and everybody knows how freakin awful it'd be and still could cool it, talk and even laugh. Just a little.

Christ! Amazing. And I can hold my own, that's the beauty part. I know you'd say that was the craziest of all, we could stop for lunch and eat and anybody watching us'd think we're havin this nice time, like we were all professors from Penn or something.

FERN

You're right. Mac got this free book on wines when he joined the Literary Guild. It's just a class thing that you so admire. You learn that there's an etiquette too in tragedy and in despair and pain. And even when you're dying. You smile, you eat, you listen to the others, you nod.

I did at lunch but was in shock. If I behaved quite naturally I wouldn't ave stopped screaming till I was carried off.

CUT TO silent scene Fern will describe

FERN

(CONT) When I think of it now, of my mind then, it--what I saw when we talked at lunch--was a battlefield, city full of black, smoking craters and people trying to get out of there on trucks, buses, all kinds of horrible screaming. I didn't hear of course, saw the mouths ripped open, frozen.

CUT BACK TO XCU of FERN

FERN

(CONT) This this this this was out the window, restaurant, with the SUN blinding, in the parking lot, off the cars. And it became like movies I saw as a kid and everybody fleeing, Chinese, pushing homemade carts through bomb blasts and smoke and hanging onto tops of buses. Hundreds and thousands of people gonna be dead. And children. I was never in a place like that but I think I got one inside, you know, these images, pictures, and if something scrapes the surface it's it's it's all nightmare underneath and never stops, endless loop. Endless. Horrible forever.

GEORGIA

Holy shit!

MOVE to MAC entering, exhausted but with false bravado

MAC

Don't take it so hard, Georgia.
We'll get the ole Mom moving. Hey!
(to FERN) Space Woman of
Philadelphia.

GEORGIA

Don't call her that. Don't you
think she's been through enough?

MAC

All of us. Your wish is my command.

GEORGIA

I'll pass.

MAC

If you wish.

GEORGIA

You oughta learn something. You oughta listen to your wife for starters.

MAC

I have.

GEORGIA

Yeah, but you don't hear.

FERN

[I] wear out.

GEORGIA

You and your stupid burnout all the time. She'll be the one who'll--

MAC

Well, she's forty. Before she caves in I'll trade her for two twenties.

GEORGIA

You're heading for something bad I think, Mac. Ask her about the...dream she has.

MAC

Georgia, my dear, it's bad every day. You get used to it. Be a man, hey? As for dreams, I don't need to bother. [I'll] just ask Prudential how long I'm going to live, throwing high blood pressure and C-over-C stress into the equation. They'll give me the number and on that birthday I'll blow my dreary brains out.

FERN

Why don't you just get out of that school? And why don't we get away from here? From ALL the misery? Your father and now your--I can't even say the word.

GEORGIA

People oughta stay dead. It aint
freakin fair.

MAC

Sure! Woods and bunnies on half a
stinking pension. Or become what?
A Kelly-boy, your counterpart in the
part-time wolf from the door
brigade. Thanks but no thanks.
I'll stay at old Allowell. There's
more dignity there, believe it or
not. I mean like one percent when
the rest of the world runs on empty.
If it kills me it kills me. Malox
might prevent farting to death at
least.

GEORGIA

Not a bad way to go here. Might
speed up a few of the wheelchairs.
(weak) That there's a joke
everybody.

FERN (to MAC)

Yeah, well I'm stopping today's
pretending right now. I'm overdrawn
on nerves like right this very
second. I can't hear any more from
anybody. Nobody! Got to get home,
[I] know that. Don't know how I'll
get there; if you don't take me I'll
call a cab.

GEORGIA

From here? Hundred with the tip!

FERN

I'll LOSE it if I don't--!

GEORGIA

Hey, he don't take you I will--we'll
split the cab. It's enough [to do]
what we did today! I mean your
mother's dead [and then] she aint
dead. Give us a break. Go look at
the roses and the wall with the two
old screwballs yourself.

MAC

Please! Come on! Fern! Trooper

like you! We came this far. I'll tell you, the doctors are most of the trouble. (imitates two doctors' voices)

"Your mother she should go, best thing in world."

"She maybe not just yet go. Well, perhaps you take responsible."

"What you think here Doctor Hong?"

"Maybe I don't know here Doctor Kong."

All this sounds at least understandable. The sentiments I mean, not the language. I mean, today's doctor, right? Ask him about a coughdrop, he's on the phone to a malpractice lawyer. But these particular pill pushers don't speak English, not really. It's not required in the slippery medical schools they were shot from; probably not required here anymore either.

Anyway we got rid of those two yapping medical fools who suck the Medicare tit I am positively sure! Pisses me to death these thieves! Thieves! Fuckin thieves!

Well...anyhow...Pop's softsoaping her in there now and--

GEORGIA

He's good at it. Ask me.

MAC (CONT)

and we'll be taking off in ten minutes guaranteed. Hey we've got to get there! It's important to everybody, not just me.

Trust me on this one, girls: I can feel it in my bones. In my sunken bones! Get there in hour and a half

and we won't stay long. Ten, twenty minutes be enough I know it. Please?

GEORGIA

No-o way, Ho-o-ZAY. [Jose]

MAC

Listen! Get with it, Georgia. You're not anymore the little gum-snapping tar[t]--

FERN

Mac!

GEORGIA

What was that word gonna be? I know some nice names too, and a lot of them are on walls. Your precious walls! (cries)

MAC

Aw come on Georgia! You're over forty! Cut the boo hoo shit! It's a joke. Nobody took Barbie or Ken away, now did they?

FERN

Now you're simply being a prick.

GEORGIA

Yeah well I'll tell you one thing, joke-man! I'm fuckin glad Jimmy is dead. I coulda married into this goonball bunch.

MAC

Then celebrate his death at the wall. Come on!

FERN

You'll say anything, won't you?

MAC

I'm sorry--that I'll say anything.

FERN

The game has to be won.

MAC

Game? I don't think...uh...so!

Couldn't think of "so"--hard word.
Shit! I gotta keep it together,
this trip! Don't know why. [Do]
one fuckin thing right in my life,
maybe.

FERN

You've done many things ri--

MAC

Won't ask [you] name one.

FERN

(weary) Male. Keep banging your
head against the wall. It won't fall
down but you can show the blood.

MAC

Can I put that in sight file? Sight
file? Whatsamatta you, mouth?
IN-sight file!

GEORGIA

I can tell you another place. Where
the sun doesn't shine.

MAC

Fuckin alternator light kept coming
on but just test [of] almighty,
right? Right! Let's let's let's
let's let's let's let's let's
IRRITATE piss out [of] him! Mac!
God says. Irritate p--!

We we we didn't...did it before
[and] we'll do it. A-a-a-a-nother.
[We did it before, we'll do it
again.]

GEORGIA

Whaaaa--?

FERN

You flatter yourself. You
really do. God and Mac!

MAC

Sin--, uh, sin--uh, pol, gies.
Cere. [sincere apologies] GOD!

FERN

Sit down and catch a breath.
There's no red hot male obligation
to hold together anymore. Cry! For
Jesus sake cry and let it out!
Shout! Scream. The old caved-in
nuts won't care here.

GEORGIA

I still aint going and you can turn
yourself inside freakin out
apologizing till you're blue in the
face. So there!

MAC

(lurching into Georgia) I'm sor--

GEORGIA

Watch it Buster!

MAC

You! Wahhhhhhh--[tch]!--(collapses
into chair)

GEORGIA

Holy shit! He is looking sorta
...blue! Like instant!

FERN

MAC!?

GEORGIA

Holy shit!

MAC

(unintelligible)

FERN

Honey?!

GEORGIA

His face, all like silly putty or
something. Jesus God!

FERN

Oh no! I should've stopped him.

GEORGIA

Purple-y...face now. More purple!

FERN
(as if passing out) Can you
help. I--

GEORGIA
Should we slap him or something?

FERN
I don't know!

GEORGIA
What's that C. P. R.?

FERN
I don't know!

GEORGIA (leaping up)
I'll rub his neck.

FERN (rising shakily)
Not too hard!

MAC
Stroh--ohhhhhh. [stroke]

FERN
Oh why didn't he tell us sooner?
About Mom? All the back and forth!

GEORGIA
Fern! Who cares? You better sit
down!

FERN
No I--

GEORGIA
Shit he's turning--I don't know--all
water or something!

FERN
What'll we do?

GEORGIA
What're we thinking about? We're
NUMBNUTS! Shit! Call a doctor!
(shouts) Doctor! Emergency! We
need a doctor here for Chrissake!

FERN

But Mac didn't like--

GEORGIA
Emergency! In here!

FERN (cont)
the two he met. He didn't, did he?

GEORGIA
Sit down Fern. Really. You can't
order from the menu for Chrissakes.

FERN
(yell) Doctor! Oh it's my fault.

GEORGIA
No it aint. Don't be ridiculous.
Shhhh! I think I can hear 'em
coming--jabbering in a shitload of
foreign languages. Yo! In here!
Doctor Rameriez-Hong!

FERN
We shouldn't've--

GEORGIA
been freakin born! My uncle Freddy
had something like this. It was
whatchacallit, Ball's Palsy. (shakes
her hands)

MAC
Ohhhhhhh!

GEORGIA
His hands [were] active enough
before that. (demonstrating by
rubbing herself) Sorry, Mac.
(who is toppling since she no longer
massages)

FERN
Just keep him from FALLING! (now
trying to get MAC sitting up
straight in order to study his face)
Can you feel anything, Mac? On the
left side? THIS side?

GEORGIA
That's his right side; it's your
lef--

MAC

Ohhhhhhhh!

GEORGIA

Hey, maybe it just looks worse
than--

FERN

No. Stroke. I...think.

GEORGIA

Hey! So you're an expert?
I don't see no medical diploma
hangin' from your ass! Come on!
Could be virus or something or or or
twenty-four hour flu? Oh where are
those (shouts) DOC--!?

FERN

It's a stroke. Poor Mac!

GEORGIA

No! Now just shut up!

- 5 INT. overhead angles of COUNSELOR'S Office. She works on great piles of paper, shoves one onto chair next to desk.

FERN enters pushing MAC in wheelchair. He wears a suit and a sweatshirt with a college seal. Great difficulty pushing it over papers, books; shoving a chair aside to put wheelchair in its place. COUNSELOR ignores her plight at first.

angle down to COUNSELOR

COUNSELOR

(brightens) Good bit of work!

FERN

Yeah, I'm getting better at it.

DISCRETIONARY ANGLES as the women talk--except when other shots indicated.

COUNSELOR
Sweatshirt's a funny item...I mean,
what with the fancy suit.

FERN Catches the drool.

COUNSELOR
Some...supplies?

FERN
Beside him in there. The one bottle
of supplement lasts him the day--
sucks it through straw. His head
sorta naturally droops to it.

COUNSELOR
Day? Do you expect us to buy more?

FERN
But I thought--?

COUNSELOR
Who knows how long he'll be here?

FERN
But I'll be coming to take him home
in the evening.

COUNSELOR
Don't bother. Leave him with us.
Just deliver a case or two of the
supplement. He's sort of
self-contained, no? Toilet right in
there with him? Like a Winnebago.

FERN
But I don't understand.

COUNSELOR
Fret not, Honey! I'll explain.
Soccer game or something? Night
football. We'll shove him out last
minute as assistant coach, get him
some overload pay. Gotta have him
on hand here so we can jump at any
moment, get it?

FERN
But the man is almost d-

COUNSELOR

School board doctor says he's fit
for service.

FERN

Oh my God!

COUNSELOR

Just what our union doctor said, but
we gotta play the cards we're dealt.

FERN

Beyond belief.

COUNSELOR

People think corruption is hand in
till, but most of it is evil
perpetuated with benign, even
Christian, grins. A thief'll just
rob you. Competently.

FERN

It'll kill him.

COUNSELOR

Our doctor says a few months, enough
for you to get some caps on those
teeth with the dental plan. Pretty
teeth. So why not perfect?

FERN

Thank you.

COUNSELOR

Hey! Don't worry. Rats may scurry
over the feet of children in the
classrooms but this is the
administration building. I'll put
Mac in the superintendent's marble
suite. The great man is in Florida,
this very moment popping a
buttercream into the mouth of a
casual whore.

FERN

But he needs ATTENTION too.

COUNSELOR

Will you stop worrying? The
building is staffed twenty four
hours a day. And the custodians all
have masters degrees. You stumbled
into a class act, Sweetie.

Atttttt any rate, got some facts and figures here for you. (looks)
Some-um-where. Well the hell with it! In summary, it's better every which way if he dies in service--

Camera follows COUNSELOR'S gaze to MAC

COUNSELOR
Poor honey hit the wall, didn't he?
Yo! Mac! Out to lunch.

FERN
And if he doesn't die in service?

COUNSELOR
God forbid!

FERN
Just keeps on going?

MAC slides down in wheelchair.

CUT TO COUNSELOR, out to both women at discretion

COUNSELOR
Then we'll use his overload pay--chaperoning at the dances, riding the bus to the planetarium--to buy back his army time. Hayrides he'd be good for.

FERN
He was never in the service.

COUNSELOR
Yeah he was, three almost four years--exact figure depends.

FERN
No way. He was jealous of his dead brother because--

COUNSELOR
He'll be joining him. They can talk about it.

FERN
We can't lie about it.

COUNSELOR

Don't you think the school board would lie? And the superintendent? And the principals look the other way or lap it up? If I had a dollar for every lapping principal--

FERN

All this is--

COUNSELOR

War, Honey. Get used to it. You're out in the working world now, right? Full time? Girl Scout oath doesn't work in the snake pit! Toughen up!

FERN

I'm trying, but they look at you funny.

COUNSELOR

I'm sure. And they wink when they hand you your hoagie, right? And ALL the alleged "cute" stories at the coffee machine?

FERN

Don't worry. I won't find my fun where I find my bread--if indeed I ever find any fun at all. Too down to even think about anything like that.

COUNSELOR

Save yourself the trouble. Talk out of their peckers. When you've known a few more than a few--as I have, believe me--you find it's all more the same than different. In the Biblical sense.

FERN

Forget it. Don't talk about it in any way shape or form. Don't want to be any deeper down than I am.

COUNSELOR

I could take you way down in the alley.

FERN

I don't believe so, thank you anyway. I recognize that expression from the blues.

COUNSELOR
Let's see about changing your major from that--in a manner of speaking.

FERN
Mac'd love you.

COUNSELOR
Maybe he will.

FERN
He thought everything was--a matter of speaking.

COUNSELOR
Forget it. He's a dead letter.

FERN
Still postage due I'm afraid.

COUNSELOR
We'll pay it. (writing) Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. That has a nice ring. I'll fill out the rest of this later.

FERN
But somebody'll have to verify it there, won't they? And won't we be doing what they're doing? I mean the principals and the whole administrative shitload?

COUNSELOR
We're recruiting everywhere, but we're still far behind the other side. At any rate, if he lasts six months, he can retire with full benefits. You can take him to Disney World--got some discount coupons here someplace. Nah, Great Adventure.

FERN
We've been.

COUNSELOR

To repeat: forget the girl scout oath. Somebody belts you with baseball bat what're supposed to do? Ask for it a little harder? What hubby here did? Being docile in this country is asking the Fortune Five Hundred, or however many rich-bitches there are, plus their mealy swarms of personal cocksuckers, to kick the living shit out of you.

FERN

Say it right out. Don't soft-pedal. (laughs) I used to be like you.

COUNSELOR

I doubt that.

FERN

Now I hold back. And in some way I guess I'm working in the midst of that aforementioned swarm.

COUNSELOR

Who could help it? But you don't have to Unca-Tom it either. Now this poor shlub here has really been through the wars so let's get him some retirement credit, yes?

FERN

I don't want to do anything dishonest, and my place is at his side.

COUNSELOR

They always want you to know your place, don't they?

FERN

On the job training.

COUNSELOR

Well your place is as far away from him as you can get; and these are dark days, Honey. Oh they're great for the guy who'll rape you while his buddies hold you down. But let's not talk history. Or Reagan.

FERN

Let's talk Mac.

COUNSELOR

Hey! (consulting form) What did they do when he got his head bashed in by that...jigaboo-spick-ghinny-reecan? Or whatever he was.

FERN

He didn't want to take a sick day.

COUNSELOR

So he took a wall job. The principal hushed it up. The kid wasn't caught and therefore went on teacher bashing.

FERN

Well it wasn't Mac's fault.

COUNSELOR

Sure?

FERN

Are you seriously--?

COUNSELOR

Playing a little Devil's Advocate, but our devils don't play, my dear. And never underestimate what that ferocious head-smashing did to him.

FERN

He...was never quite the same. He talked the same...still had jokes, but--

COUNSELOR

He was nice. If you're nice you fade into abstraction. If they remember you at all it's only to do a number on you.

FERN

I know there's a vein of truth but--

COUNSELOR

I'm understating. If I told the whole truth I'd choke to death. (chokes herself)

FERN looks around the office; after a beat, COUNSELOR follows her gaze, then the camera.

FERN

Fine thing to die for.

COUNSELOR

Did Christ do much better? Besides, some of the youngsters probably liked him and--despite the sabotage efforts of the country, the state, and the community--learned something from him.

CAMERA HAS WANDERED TO MAC, STAYS.

FERN

I suppose. It isn't much.

COUNSELOR

Many, grimly enough, are forced to be content with less in this land of the brave. Now let's see.

CUT BACK TO WOMEN

COUNSELOR

(CONT) (pulling out another form and writing) Two questions: telephone skills, and foreign language proficiency.

FERN

Talks to his father in the evening. I just hear...creaks when he talks to me.

COUNSELOR

He can answer the phone. We have a new system and anybody reaching him'll just assume another line's gone bad.

FERN

He studied Spanish for a month in Mexico.

COUNSELOR

I'll put down fluent.

FERN

That's a laugh. We both went down there. Me for the sights. The guy running it was from a bush little college in Iowa--

COUNSELOR

So long as it's accredited it can be moronic through and through.

FERN

and his one teensy ad in the A. F.T. newspaper drew five students, one woman among them, so he saved a bit by renting space in the worst neighborhood in the town.

The whores were pounding on the door before he checked attendance.

COUNSELOR

Shall I finish? Soon a roll before lunch was considered, uh--?

FERN

Conducive to academic standards.

COUNSELOR

Poor teachers. Have a party for 'em you gotta order twice as much food and booze; if sex is on the menu and it's practically free--?

(a) DISSOLVE TO CHUBBY, TWEEDY MALE TEACHERS WITH LOADED PLATES, SEXY WOMEN HANGING FROM THEM.

5 (CONT) DISSOLVE BACK TO THE TWO WOMEN.

FERN

Right. Gluttons. They were [while] in Mexico all right.

COUNSELOR

Middle class. Comes from always thinking you're being ripped off. Naturally enough.

FERN

(feigned shock) Oh my.

COUNSELOR

You don't have to fake it. Or fake faking it. You come off as more innocent than he'd remember you, yes?

FERN

Accurate. As I said, I had to get a real job, and get along on it. So I play along and rest my brain.

COUNSELOR

And that other woman, back there in the white, passionate heat of our penurious, down-and-dirty southern neighbor? Acrid dust, panting. Getting six to twelve credits.

FERN

She played it both ways, took on a dusky whore in the morning, one or more of the fellows who were still standing in the afternoon.

COUNSELOR

A woman after mine own heart. Don't I wish! Did she have her doctorate?

FERN

Of course. But she still knew better than that.

COUNSELOR

And would she give him a good reference? Another letter in his file wouldn't hurt. If only he had sucked a little more ass! Nobody's too good for politics. Don't make the same mistake yourself.

FERN

I hope I eventually have the strength to be just like him in that regard.

COUNSELOR

How precious! Then don't throw the wheelchair out. Anyway, Dr. whats-her-face amid the seamy musical beds?

FERN

She gave him a social disease; the whores gave him the A+ that's on his transcript.

COUNSELOR

That could be considered excellent, no? From such professionals?

FERN

He dripped for the rest of the month and I drank.

COUNSELOR

But you didn't leave him.

FERN

What for? Because his cock is connected to his brain. Was.

COUNSELOR

And you didn't seek revenge by--?

FERN

Too expensive listening to that many assholes. Better the one you're married to. Oh my God when I think of it. When I think of it all! Hell, when I think at all!

COUNSELOR

Don't bother. That's why I'm here--and the union.

FERN

His mother was dead and then she wasn't dead!

COUNSELOR

Uh huh. Well that's too much family for me. Just keep it to yourself. We got enough trouble with Drooling Delbert here.

FERN

If it's going to be too much trouble I--

COUNSELOR

Do you mind a very personal question?

FERN

Doesn't everybody?

COUNSELOR

A question's not usually an answer.
Ask Teach. (a beat) Never mind.

COUNSELOR

(to MAC) Ever pop a wheelie on that
thing?--a little smalltalk what the
hell.

FERN

Go ahead...she winced, did sensitive
Fern.

COUNSELOR

Ouch. Anyway, can he, uh, still get
a hardon?

FERN

Come on now. I really don't wanna
talk about such--

COUNSELOR

Aw you come on, please. Between us
antisluts. Such a natural
curiosity. How could I be ashamed
of it? How could you? Can you, uh,
shift him to a higher gear? Hmmmmmm?
(punches FERN'S arm, makes motor
sounds) Hmmmmmmmm little lady? [Is
he] Porsche or Escort?

FERN

I really rather not--

COUNSELOR

Give me a hint.

FERN

Let me off the hook on this one.
Just this once.

COUNSELOR

Bitsy-witsy hint?

FERN

I don't think so. In the
concentration camp of the workplace,
I've taken to maintaining decorum.

COUNSELOR

That's temporary, much of it at least. You don't feel free yet. Now, since I'm taking him off your hands--? One extraordinarily good turn, don't you think? Can he? Fern? Honey?

FERN

Is the pope an arab?

COUNSELOR

Hmmph. Well...too bad cause (rising and then demonstrating) you could use it to pull him along when you're sick of pushing.

FERN

Or r-r-r-ratchet him him up a few notches so he can see all the...

ANGLE UP to window as two girls pass

FERN (CONT)

luscious Lolitas passing by that window.

COUNSELOR

Don't they? It's a...fringe benefit of this job.

FERN

Might bring him back to life.

COUNSELOR

How far?

FERN

Fifty percent wouldn't be that much different.

COUNSELOR

Unfair, most men come up to that.

FERN

So I've noticed.

COUNSELOR

Hatrack? A useful use to be sure.

FERN

An idea.

COUNSELOR

Make him a kind of Bauhaus fixture,
Art Nouveau.

FERN

He used to say "Art is a fart
blown through the asshole of time."

COUNSELOR

Anti-intellectual pose. Comes from
the shame of being a teacher in a
culture of grasping.

FERN

He's not high up enough for a
hatrack. A girl tosses things like
this!

COUNSELOR

Right! Like a sissy. Do it again.

FERN

Like this!

COUNSELOR

Charming!

FERN

Thank you. It's what exercise
should be--not much harder than
breathing.

COUNSELOR

And most feminine too.

FERN

I wouldn't know about that. Most of
the time I feel exhausted and could
care less how I look. Look like
some gawky boy.

COUNSELOR

That's my department.

FERN

And the clothes don't help. These
new clothes--I had to get something
to go out to work every day.

COUNSELOR

A shame the fairy designers didn't have Marilyn Monroe for a mother. But, show your body off anyway. Flaunt it Fern!

FERN

I sort of want to fall in between the Flaunt and the Mouse. What the bosses want. As I said, I used to use the left side of my mouth for politics also, but I've learned to--

COUNSELOR

bite your tongue, I know. But never mind them, the male- asshole- raised-to-the- asshole-power establishment.

FERN

You taught math.

COUNSELOR

As a woman they wouldn't let me. Anxiety.

FERN

Oh?

COUNSELOR

Yeah, I thought six inches was this long. (indicates short length with fingers)

FERN

(pushing COUNSELOR'S fingers together) Push them in further.

COUNSELOR

No, I'll bring YOU out rather. Then I'll nail him up on the wall. Make it easier to toss your pretty Easter bonnet.

FERN

There I draw the line. That's cruel. I've been so smashed to shit that I can accommodate anything in my mind and even relish it, but doing [that]--?

COUNSELOR

What might you be relishing now?

FERN

Lots of things I never even thought about before.

COUNSELOR

Give me a hint cause I've thought about everything, believe me.

FERN

Couldn't begin.

COUNSELOR

Well I'll tell you one thing. Once you do get it up it'll never go down again if you catch my drift.

FERN

Oh my!

COUNSELOR

So don't worry about putting me out. If I cash in on that payoff I'll be happy enough.

FERN

Poor Mac. He won't enjoy it.

COUNSELOR

Not likely. Any signal to his brain is liable to arrive around year 2005.

FERN

(laughing) Do you actually mean that you--? (the rest will be unintelligible.)

COUNSELOR

I'll paint the principal's face on it, another schmuck.

FERN

How would I bury him? (hysterical and embracing COUNSELOR)

COUNSELOR

Turn him over and screw him into the ground!

FERN

The Earth Mother every man seeks.

COUNSELOR

Blindly.

DISCRETIONARY ANGLES AS THEY ARE LAUGHING, DANCING WITH
AMAZING SLOWNESS.

FERN

Like moles.

COUNSELOR

(kissing FERN) There! There's so
much for you! The world is so much
wider now.

FERN

I...don't know.

COUNSELOR

A stroke. Of luck! Has given you a
life. Renewal!

FERN

Neo-Fern!

COUNSELOR

You must try everything! Literally
everything!

FERN

Figuratively exhausts me. I'm
getting tired just thinking of the
one you seem to be, uh, suggesting.

COUNSELOR

Such cautious language. How male.

FERN

Coitus (pulling away) interruptus.

FERN gets the wheelchair between them, moves it as COUNSELOR
chases her.)

COUNSELOR

Really, dear, I just represent life,
and he can no longer pose between
you and life.

FERN

Well, just a little while longer.

COUNSELOR

Don't be afraid, I represent the union too.

FERN

I appreciate that but can't we kinda keep things separate?

COUNSELOR

Men don't have such nice concerns. They do whatever erects them. It's your turn.

FERN

Yes. I see. I think I see anyway. Or don't. Six of one, half-dozen of the other.

COUNSELOR

(tossing it) Here's the key to my apartment. I do hope you don't think that I'm too forward. I have to be aggressive for the union, of course, but on my own time I just like to cuddle up.

FERN

I couldn't.

COUNSELOR

Most people can't but they eventually get to it--no matter what it is.

FERN

I'll keep this but I'm not making any promises--and nothing ever ever in front of--(nodding)

COUNSELOR

What do you take me for?

FERN

I just want it to be clear.

COUNSELOR

Besides, that's the big time. We want to start small.

FERN

You've been so educational.

COUNSELOR

My job. Speaking of whiiiiii-ch.
(Returns to desk;

FERN comes out from behind
wheelchair.)

FERN

Don't be modest. You're always
willing to give more. Serve.

COUNSELOR

(indicating a place for

FERN to sign) You've got it. And
so sweetly! Perceptive and lovely.

FERN

Be gentle with him.

COUNSELOR

I promise. With you too--at first.
(taking pen back and not letting go
of FERN'S hand.)

FERN

You're too...(getting hand loose)
kind.

COUNSELOR

Not at all.

FERN

A friend in my need.

COUNSELOR

So sweet.

FERN

So many people today won't put
themselves out. (standing)

COUNSELOR

Don't mention it. And I'm sorry
if I--

FERN

Do I look all right?

WALK AWAY FROM ME. COUNSELOR

Like this? FERN

Is that natural? COUNSELOR

Like everything else, yes and no. FERN

I'd like to take both of you around the world. COUNSELOR

Mac and me? FERN

You and you. COUNSELOR

You're so forceful! FERN

(advancing again as FERN withdraws even more rapidly, exits) I've another side too. COUNSELOR

You'll show it to Mac? FERN (off)

Put it right in his face. COUNSELOR

Just know you two'll be great friends! FERN

[It'll be] like a-- (shoves wheelchair and MAC tumbles to the floor.) COUNSELOR

What's that I heard? FERN

Music. Love song. COUNSELOR

Lovely! FERN
 --like a honeymoon! COUNSELOR
 Aces! FERN
 (reaching down to MAC) I'll
 carry him over the threshold. COUNSELOR

- 5) DISCRETIONARY SPLIT SCREENS, CUTS, DISSOLVES, VOICE-OVERS, STACCATO JAZZ MUSIC INTERSPERSED--MOST AT AEROBICS CLASS

GEORGIA speaks only.

a) GEORGIA on the phone, simultaneously cutting her toenails--could use an extra hand. She is dressed in a long PHILADELPHIA EAGLES t-shirt.

b) FERN at aerobics class, moving, it would seem, a beat behind everybody else.

c) A dark room full of flimsy wooden crates.

GEORGIA

Yeah? Well you're wrong. Georgia knows herself all right. More of a wallflower. That's right. Shy. A shy one that's me. A busy shy one if you get me. I mean lots of activity but still you don't change. You stay the way you was.

Do what? Well that's a first. I thought I'd heard everything and tried most. I'd be dead if I had good sense.

Uh huh. Well I'll tell you one thing: you heat up that sexed-up brain anymore [it]'ll explode.

Date? Sorry but I'm busy till 2010. Take a number. Anyways, I'd feel funny using that word. Date! Kiss MY ass.

What?! Hey it's just an expression. Boy!

Oh? Both before it and after it? Whew! That's quite a promise I'd say. I'd have to consult with my cute young doctor--see if I'm up to it. Or him. Or he's up.

Listen! That other family member I knew didn't promise anything but he delivered--if I can remember correctly--and some stuff kinky for its time. Anyways, lots of great events [have] come and gone. Water under the bridge. And assholes. No! Not under the bridge. You know what I mean.

Hey! That's enough! Now slow it down! And talk is cheap, Baby. Now don't repeat yourself. Uh huh? I got that the first time. And too bad I did.

Don't hit me over the head I always say--I wanna be conscious to enjoy it. (a few beats)

No I don't get it--and if I do it aint funny.

I'm gonna get it? Oh don't I have to watch what I say? Holy Crap it's like junior highschool everything dirty. Like Mac's Allowell School I guess. Well of course I don't have

a ruler right here. Do you? Idiot.

Love is like football, a game of inches? Yeah? It's like football all right, complicated and dirty.

But real love talk don't have to be that dirty, old fella. It has whatchacallit, ceased being funny. Now I'm gonna hang right up if you don't--

[From this point on,

FERN

- 1) exercises more vigorously,
- 2) sarcastically imitates a rigorous young instructor,
- 3) makes faces in reaction to a scolding,
- 4) slows her actions drastically when the instructor's back is obviously turned, speeds up when being observed again, and then
- 5) imitates the mincing quality of the instructor's departing walk.

Each action can stop the flow of GEORGIA'S words, even though we might still see her talking in the silence, simultaneously concentrating on trimming her toenails, sometimes placing the receiver a foot or two away.]

GEORGIA (CONT)

Hey! That's real nice. I take back half of what I thought. I walk in beauty like the night, right? Will you read me the whole book? That's better. It might cure the sex on your brain.

Your sauteed brain. Hey I love it! I should write songs. Liver and

onions. What else is sauteed?
 SAUTEING: KEY TO KITCHEN
 SUCCESS--Food Section of Times or
 something. --"How sauteing saved my
 marriage." Poisoned my boyfriend.

Listen. Now listen. If we're
 gonna do it--and we aint, fars I
 know--we'll eventually get to it.
 Don't worry so much. You aint gonna
 die, [at] least not today. And if
 you do, well that just one little
 bit of heaven you're just gonna
 miss. Then you can ask that other
 member of your family what it was
 like. So hot he left it, right?
 Glory does weird things. (covers
 mouthpiece with hand) GLORY'S WEIRD
 SAYS DEAD MARINE--National Enquirer.

Now don't take off on weird.
 If we do it we'll stay,
 whatchacallit, convention--at least
 for a while, hey?

Convention-AL? Thank you. I wanna
 talk good English--I mean after the
 sex shit you talk I'll wanna bath in
 a minute.

Whew! Do you think up those slimy
 things by yourself or--?

Good girls go to heaven and bad
 girls go everywhere? Well that's
 cute. Where'd you hear that one?
 Go on! The stuff you make up's at
 the bottom of the garbage pail.
 Bumper sticker? Well they do come
 up with them. Well now I don't
 know. Maybe somebody could make up
 a bumper sticker about a girl
 doesn't know one moment to the next
 whether she'll be good or bad. Have
 to be big bumper.

But sometimes I know.

SHE KNOWS AND SHE DON'T KNOW--New
 York News. That's not a good one is
 it? Grammar. Oh? No kidding! I

might keep you around [if] you keep up the compliments. Oooooops.

Well now that isn't a compliment. It is and it isn't. Listen! How about all this church work you're supposed to be doing, old man? Uh huh. Get out! I heard that one before. Gotta test some sin out [to] get to know the enemy? And I'm the sinful vessel, right? A bible verse and then they get worse.

And blame us for your fantasies [the] way you blame the faggots for your other ones. And beat 'em up. Poor bastards, they can't win for losing.

I had some AC-DCs and they were the sweetest. Saute a little something in the pan--I remember that from recipes. Just a hobby if you ask me. Cooking? Nah, I mean religion for a lot of people today. Tomorrow [it]'ll be something else. Hang-gliding or something.

No I never heard of Hung-gliding, but would you believe that I enjoy that role? Sinful vessel I mean. Not always, but sometimes it's as good as a hot-fudge sundae or something. No, don't bring one over. I'm unavailable.

SINFUL VESSEL--LOCAL GIRL LOVES IT!

CUT TO someone shoving MAC and wheelchair into the crates.

GEORGIA (CONT)

There he goes again! I'll tell you you better bring a nice present [if] you do come over here, [after] forcing me to listen to all this warped shit.

You will? From Fredericks catalog? What? Just leave the receipt in there and I'll know how much to give you back. That stuff must cost a thousand bucks a pound it's so-o

flimsy. Model? I try things on for myself--if you happen to be here--?

Hey! See-through pee-through, what do I care? I can't believe I'm saying this to you.

Oooops! Sounds like a heart attack. Gurggle gurggle. You take your pills? Oh oh. Now don't talk when you're dying. Didn't your mother ever teach you nothing?

What's that? Don't need pills for anything. Nothing, huh? Terrific.

Oh no! Uh uh. No more bragging. Uh huh? Yup. No more bragging, and no more gagging. All right? Poor ole Mac bragged a lot and Jimmy, so I guess they get it from you.

Yeah. Uh huh. Well you just bring that old man's shrunken pee-whizzle over here and we'll see.

SHRUNKEN PEE-WHIZZLE'S AMAZING!
--The Star.

Uh huh. Yup. Like I said!
We. Will. See.

GEORGIA laughs, and hanging up:

My God the dirty old men are getting dirtier. It's all so funny and disgusting!

CUT TO FERN collapsing and flinging her headband away.

BACK TO GEORGIA XCU, puzzled, shocked, bemused, resigned, staring long at her toes.

ASSHOLE SHORTAGE JUST RUMOR --
The Globe.

We hear a crate fall before and into

BLACKOUT.

Under trailer titles, repeat of visual motifs of beginning.
REPEAT MUSICAL ONES TOO, but very muted.

Add two individual shots of hand-tinted photos depicting each brother on pony. Linger in XCU on each face.

We eventually get to that guy polishing his red car, smiling his idiot grin.

Only the grin, Cheshire Cat like, remains for a few seconds after credits.